

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02131 141531Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----014155 141532Z /53

O R 141447Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7627
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T BEIRUT 2131

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, LE
SUBJ: CEASE-FIRE IN BEIRUT: DISCUSSION WITH CHAMOUNS

REF: BEIRUT 2121

1. CALLED ON CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND SON DANY AT 1230 LOCAL AT MAUDE FARAJALLAH'S. SPOKE TO THEM IN TERMS SIMILAR TO THOSE USED WITH GEMAYELS ABOUT NEED FOR RESTRAINT AND FOR COOPERATION WITH SYRIANS AND ABOUT FACT THAT HOPES OF INTERNATIONALIZING PROBLEM WERE UNREALISTIC.

2. CHAMOUN'S RESPONSE IN BRIEF WAS THAT LEBANESE HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO TOTALLY INDISCRIMINATE ATTACK WITH HEAVY WEAPONS BY SYRIANS WHO HAD BEEN ORDERED TO INTERVENE BY PRESIDENT SARKIS. WHATEVER LEBANESE MAY HAVE DONE TO SYRIANS IT DID NOT JUSTIFY INHUMAN SCALE OF SYRIAN RESPONSE. LEBANESE WERE NOW VERY BITTER WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS OVER HIS ROLE IN THIS AFFAIR. SOME WAY SHOULD BE FOUND TO REPLACE SYRIANS, WHO HAD POLITICAL DESIGNS HERE AND HAD ALLIED THEMSELVES WITH LEFTIST ELEMENTS. THEY COULD
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02131 141531Z

NO LONGER FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AS SECURITY FORCE BECAUSE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS HAD LOST CONFIDENCE IN THEM. DANY SAID HE HAD MADE THIS POINT TO HISHAM SHIGABI DAY BEFORE ON TELEPHONE.

3. I ASKED CHAMOUN WHAT HE THOUGHT WOULD HAPPEN IF SYRIANS WITHDREW. HE SAID FIGHT BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND PALESTINIANS WOULD RESUME ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. I INDICATED THAT THAT WAS NOT A VERY

PROMISING PROSPECT AND CHAMOUN SAID IT WAS BETTER TO FACE JUST ONE ENEMY THAN TWO. LEBANESE WERE FED UP WITH PRESENT SITUATION, WHICH COULD NOT CONTINUE. THEY HAD TO DECIDE WHAT THEIR FUTURE WAS GOING TO BE. IF U.S. AND WORLD COMMUNITY DID NOT CARE, ALL RIGHT, THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS WOULD DIE, BUT NOT WITHOUT PUTTING UP A FIGHT.

4. DANY SAID HE THOUGHT NEXT FIFTEEN DAYS WERE CRITICAL AND THAT MUCH WOULD DEPEND ON HOW APRIL 20 SESSION OF PARLIAMENT TURNED OUT. IF PARLIAMENT MET AND SUNNIS STOOD UP AND AGREED WITH CHRISTIANS ON NEED TO BRING ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE UNDER CONTROL, LEBANESE ARMY WOULD BE ABLE TO ENTER INTO PICTURE AND BEGIN PLAYING ITS PROPER ROLE. IN ABSENCE OF SUNNI WILLINGNESS TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED, CHRISTIANS WOULD HAVE TO MAKE SOME GRAVE DECISIONS. THEY COULD NOT CONTINUE TO LIVE WITH ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE. THAT PRESENCE WOULD EITHER HAVE TO BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL OR CHRISTIANS WOULD HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THEIR OWN FUTURE AND FORGET THE SUNNIS AND THE PALESTINIANS. THE MARONITES COULD NO LONGER SPEAK FOR THE WHOLE COUNTRY. THEY WERE A MINORITY. THEY WERE IN TOUCH WITH SHIA LEADERSHIP WHICH SHARED THEIR VIEWS ON THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM BUT SUNNIS WERE AFRAID TO TALK. IT WAS CLEAR THAT NATIONAL CONSENSUS WAS NO LONGER UP TO THE MARONITES, IT WAS UP TO THE SUNNIS.

5. I NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH CHRISTIANS HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH SHIA LEADERSHIP THERE WAS SOME QUESTION AS TO WHETHER LATTER HAD
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02131 141531Z

ANY FOLLOWERS. THEY WERE MOSTLY MIDDLE-AGED OR OLDER. THEY HAD NOT LIVED IN SOUTH FOR A LONG TIME AND DID NOT HAVE MUCH CONTACT WITH SHIA YOUTH. ISRAELIS HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED TO FIND DEGREE TO WHICH SHIA YOUTH IN SOUTH HAD BEEN RADICALIZED. CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT PUT TOO MUCH WEIGHT ON VIEWS OF SHIA LEADERS IN ABSENCE OF SOME INDICATION THEY COULD DELIVER. DANY SAID CHAMOUNISTS WELL AWARE OF THIS SHIA WEAKNESS AND HAD BEEN TELLING ISRAELIS FOR PAST THREE YEARS YOUNG SHIA WERE GOING COMMUNIST. ISRAELIS HAD REFUSED TO BELIEVE IT. CHAMOUNISTS HAD NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT SHIA LEADERSHIP, BUT THEY WERE ALL THEY HAD TO WORK WITH.

6. CONTINUING IN A CATAclySMIC VEIN, DANY SAID FOR FIRST TIME CHRISTIANS WERE EVACUATING AIN AR-RUMMANEH AND BADARO. EVERYONE ALONG CONFRONTATION LINE WHO HAD A FAMILY TO GO TO OR A HOUSE IN THE VILLAGE WAS LEAVING ON A LONG WEEKEND AND THEY WOULD NOT RETURN UNTIL THE SITUATION STABILIZED. MEANWHILE, THE POOR PEOPLE WHO HAD NO PLACE TO GO WERE LEFT BEHIND. THE DAMAGE THAT HAD BEEN DONE BY THE SYRIANS WAS ENORMOUS. THIRTY-TWO CIVILIANS HAD BEEN KILLED AND HUNDREDS WOUNDED. THE DAMAGE WAS ESTIMATED IN MILLIONS OF POUNDS. PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH WOULD GET FINANCING FROM THE ARABS TO RESTORE THEIR HOUSES, BUT CHRISTIANS OF AIN AR-RUMMANEH WOULD HAVE TO REBUILD THEIR HOUSES WITH THEIR OWN CAPI-

TAL. (WE UNDERSTAND SOME MUSLIMS ARE ALSO VACATING SHIYAH AND MOVING INTO SPACES IN CAMPS BEING VACATED BY THOSE RETURNING TO THE SOUTH. CHRISTIANS ARE NOT ONLY PEOPLE WHO ARE FRIGHTENED.)

7. DANY SAID WE COULD RENDER A GREAT SERVICE IF WE COULD CONVINCE SUNNIS THAT CHAMOUNISTS WERE SINCERELY INTERESTED IN A UNITED LEBANON. DRUZES WOULD COOPERATE WITH THEM BUT SUNNIS WERE YET TO COME ON BOARD. THEY WERE THE CRUCIAL FACTOR.

8. COMMENT: AS USUAL, I AM IMPRESSED WITH HOW REASONABLE THE CHAMOUNS SOUND EVEN THOUGH I KNOW THEIR INFORMATION IS OFTEN AWRY AND THAT THEY ARE GRINDING THEIR OWN VERY SPECIAL AXES. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT BOTH GEMAYELS AND CHAMOUNS ARE AFRAID OF SYRIAN PRESENCE IN ASHRAFIYAH AND THAT THIS WILL BE A SERIOUS RESTRAINING
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 02131 141531Z

INFLUENCE ON THEM. AT SAME TIME, BELIEVE WE CAN EXPECT THEM TO MAKE MAJOR EFFORT TO MOBILIZE PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE AND AGAINST SYRIANS AS WELL. DANY CHAMOUN SAYS NEXT FIFTEEN DAYS WILL BE CRITICAL AND I AGREE WITH HIM. DO NOT KNOW WHETHER MY EFFORTS THIS MORNING WILL HAVE ANY IMPACT, BUT NEXT FEW DAYS MAY TELL. I AM PLANNING TO SEE BOUTROS AT SOME POINT THIS EVENING TO DISCUSS SITUATION FURTHER.
PARKER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMISTICE, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT02131
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780161-0058
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780458/aaaabwyf.tel
Line Count: 144
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b154a1b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 2121
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2971230
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CEASE-FIRE IN BEIRUT: DISCUSSION WITH CHAMOUNS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE, (CHAMOUN, CAMILLE), (PARKER, RICHARD B)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b154a1b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014